The Golden Forest

Chantal Jackson[1]

It is the deepest black of night.
I walk the sand,
away from the rumbling surf,
onto grass, between trees,
into a glade.
The sea has faded into silence.
The stars are high above me,
sprinkled through the velvet sky.

I am aware of the trees,
as if I had just awoken in this wood.
There are little lights everywhere.
I look closely at a branch.
The twigs hold tiny lanterns, in clusters,
like gumnuts.
Some are lit,
and their small flames illuminate
squared, glass sides,
frosted with gold.
All around, every leaf, every branch
has gold glittering gently.

I stand silent in this astonishing place.

Something shining, drifting, catches my eye.
A star falling softly,
down through the branches of the trees
as it leaves the sky.

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1 Chantal Jackson is a poet and artist living in Canberra. She came from the United States in 1983 at the age of ten. Since moving to Australia she has also lived in Melbourne and Darwin and in a community in the Victoria River District in the Northern Territory. This poem stems from a dream and has echoes of the Darwin seaside.

I lift my hand toward it
and it settles gently,
miraculously coming to rest on me,
without any feeling of its touch.
I raise my hand closer to my face, gingerly, to see.
It is a tiny star-snowflake of gold,
a gift from the shimmering sky.
It glitters in this deepest of nights,
in this enchanted glade,
by the sea.